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News Release

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NORWOOD RWSD AND USDA CELEBRATE EARTH DAY

Huntington (#03-24; 4-22-2003): In recognition of the 33rd Anniversary of Earth Day, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced the selection of 42 rural water and wastewater community infrastructure projects in 29 states to receive funding totaling over \$104 million. This funding assists rural communities address health and environmental issues and promotes business development.

In Indiana, USDA Rural Development announced today that over \$6 million of this funding will support the major rehabilitation of the water and wastewater systems being undertaken by the Norwood Regional Water and Sewer District in an area just west of Huntington. Officials of Norwood RWSD and local residents welcomed this news as a sign that they will soon enjoy improved water and wastewater disposal services.

Kelly Barmann, USDA Rural Development Assistant State Director, presented a check for the funding today to Norwood RWSD Board members, Dee Hinesley, Dave Hacker and Rhonda Adams. Local, county, state and federal officials joined local residents on Earth Day 2003 at the Lodge in Norwood Estates to celebrate the progress these important projects represent.

Barmann said, "Its very appropriate that on Earth Day we gather to celebrate a major environmental and health improvement project such as this one being undertaken by the Norwood RWSD. Congratulations on your commitment to the well being of this community and to our environment. USDA Rural Development is proud to be your partner."

The Norwood area has 165 single family homes, a 65 unit apartment complex, and a 95 bed nursing home. Effluent from the current treatment facility flows into Clear Creek, which flows into the Wabash River. Yakes Subdivision has 68 single family homes. These homes are on private wells and septic systems. Field tests performed by the Huntington County Department of Health found that the wells in Yakes Subdivision are being contaminated due to the failure of the individual absorption fields. The water supply system for the Norwood area is also experiencing major problems.

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The existing wastewater system was constructed in the 1970's and has been in violation of its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems permit since 1989. The utility was placed in receivership for continued failure to address these violations. The scope of the proposed wastewater collection and treatment system improvements consists of rehabilitation of the existing collection system to reduce or eliminate sources of clear water infiltration; rehabilitation of the existing lift stations; construction of a new wastewater treatment plant; and demolition of the existing wastewater treatment facility.

The Norwood area's existing water supply, treatment and distribution system was also constructed in the 1970's. The system is in poor condition with serious health concerns. Water main breaks, low pressure, and extended losses of service are being experienced. The scope of the proposed water system improvements include: construction of two new wells; a new water treatment facility; a new elevated water tank to provide reliable water pressure; abandonment of the existing water distribution system; and construction of new 8-inch water mains and appurtenances for the service area.

USDA Rural Development has partnered recently with several other communities in Huntington County to improve their water and wastewater disposal systems including the Town of Mount Etna, Town of Warren, Lancaster, and Bippus Regional Sewer District.

Since 1994, USDA Rural Development has invested over \$32 million in Huntington County including \$19 million in mortgage loans for single family home buying, over \$12 million in funding for water and wastewater disposal system improvements, and \$1 million in assistance to rural businesses.

Single family home loans, rural rental housing, water and waste water facility funding, business and industry loans, and community facility loans and grants are financial resources available from USDA Rural Development. Questions concerning these services in this area can be directed to USDA Rural Development, 210 E. Monroe, Decatur, IN 46733; phone 260-724-4124, extension 4.